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Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/45, the General Assembly reaffirmed the ways and means regarding confidence- and security-building measures set out in the report of the Disarmament Commission on its 1993 session, and it called upon Member States to pursue these ways and means through sustained consultations and dialogue, while at the same time avoiding actions that may hinder or impair such a dialogue. Furthermore, the General Assembly urged States to comply strictly with all bilateral, regional and international agreements, including arms control and disarmament agreements, to which they are a party. The Assembly also emphasized that the objective of confidence-building measures should be to help strengthen international peace and security and be consistent with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments, and encouraged the promotion of bilateral and regional confidence-building measures, with the consent and participation of the parties concerned, to avoid conflict and prevent the unintended and accidental outbreak of hostilities. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session containing the views of Member States on confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request.

2. A note verbale was sent on 19 February 2008 to all Member States requesting their views. To date, replies from the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cuba, Mexico, Panama, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Spain and Ukraine have been received and are reproduced in section II below. Additional replies received will be issued as addenda to the present report.

II. Replies received from Member States

Bosnia and Herzegovina

[Original: English]
[30 April 2008]

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a signatory of the Open Skies Agreement and a member State of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe which participates in the implementation of the Vienna Document 1999 of the negotiations on building trust and security. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also the signatory of the Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control, Article IV, Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- *By implementing the Open Skies Agreement, which establishes the open skies regime for reconnaissance flights above the territories of other countries, the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina enables air reconnaissance of territories of all "signatory countries", and contributes to further development and strengthening of peace, stability and security cooperation in Europe, based on open and transparent principles.*

- *By implementing measures to build trust and security incorporated in the Vienna Document 1999, relating to exchange and verification of military information regarding: armed forces of participating countries, their military activities, defence policy including military budgets, locations, strength and*

quality of military formations and units, exchange of annual activity calendars and pre-announcement of military activities, their monitoring with the goal of strengthening trust and openness. Bosnia and Herzegovina is promoting deeper, broader and more comprehensive cooperation between participating countries.

2. Guided by the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Annex 1-B, Agreement on Regional Stabilization, Article IV, signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control on 14 June 1996. The Agreement was also signed by the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Montenegro. In order to create sustainable peace in the territories of these countries, measures for regional stabilization and control of weapons were set forth and new forms of cooperation were established in the field of security, aimed at building transparency and trust, and achieving balanced and stable levels of defence with the least quantity of weapons, in line with security principles of signatory countries and the need to avoid competition in this field.

- *The Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina attaches great importance to strengthening trust between the SEE countries. We believe that bilateral measures undoubtedly contribute to increasing transparency, openness, trust and security through strengthening good-neighbourly relations and cooperation in the field of security and control of weapons. The implementation of the Sub-regional Cooperation Agreement is certainly a good example of a successful forum of cooperation as well as the start of implementation of Annex 1-B, Article V, of the Dayton Peace Agreement, on the basis of which two measures of verification have been undertaken in the form of mutual evaluation visits between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Germany. Those visits were carried out in keeping with provisions of the Vienna Document 1999, and the guest inspectors from the SEE countries were involved in inspection teams. In this way, the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina is improving its position and significance in regional cooperation in the field of strengthening measures of trust and security.*

3. Confirming the value of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of other international laws, and acknowledging the need to improve cooperation in the field of security by further stimulating responsible and cooperative behaviour in the field of security, the Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a sound participant in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons of the United Nations programme on small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, as well as the United Nations Register on conventional weapons and in many other major political and military documents and decisions of the OSCE.

- *Since all the above-said instruments constitute an integral and essential element of European security and the security cooperation and stability policy, we believe that security and stability cooperation policy will remain a strong mechanism for strengthening security as long as a security risk is there. The Ministry of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina is determined to develop other forms of cooperation in the field of defence, at different regional levels, and to share its rich experiences and acquired knowledge relating to the implementation of the agreement on the control of weapons with other interested countries.*

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[11 June 2008]

1. The Republic of Cuba considers that, in accordance with the directives approved by consensus in 1988 by the United Nations General Assembly, confidence-building "is a step-by-step process of taking all concrete and effective measures which express political commitments and are of military significance and which are designed to make progress in strengthening confidence and security to lessen tension and assist in arms limitation and disarmament".[1]

2. Confidence-building measures are based on the following principles:

(a) Refraining from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations Charter;

(b) Peaceful settlement of disputes;

(c) Non-intervention in internal affairs;

(d) Cooperation among States in solving international (and regional) problems and in promoting human rights;

(e) Sovereign equality and respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty;

(f) Equal rights and self-determination of peoples;

(g) Fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law;

(h) As countries need to monitor their borders, an appropriate system of communication between States is needed in order to avoid possible sources of conflict, taking into account the proximity of States and the confluence of ships, aircraft and units in general in adjacent areas.

3. Nevertheless, for the establishment of confidence-building measures in the military sphere, tensions in the region or subregion have to be reduced and cooperation must be enhanced so that any situation, however complicated it is, can be resolved through dialogue and negotiation. When there are certain minimum conditions for reducing tension, some measures such as the following can be implemented:

(a) Provide advance notice of all exercises and manoeuvres that take place in the region, especially those involving the movement of forces and equipment by sea and by air in areas close to other countries;

(b) Adopt measures for the gradual reduction of forces and equipment involved in such exercises; reduce live-fire activities with long-range weapons systems that could hit unintended targets at sea, on land or in the air;

(c) Provide notification of reservations of air and maritime space of the purposes of such exercises or other military activities. Such notification should take

[1] Comprehensive Study on Confidence-Building Measures, Disarmament Study No. 7, United Nations, 1982.

place through the established channels and reach all interested parties sufficiently in advance;

(d) At the time of approval of exercises and manoeuvres of a certain scale, explain their objectives, the tactical and operational issues involved and the numbers of forces participating;

(e) When possible, invite military representatives from the countries of the region to participate as observers in some events or movements of these exercises;

(f) Conduct the preparatory combat activities of the armed forces at a prudent distance from the coasts or borders of other countries, unless the latter are participating in those activities or give their prior consent to the party conducting them. Particularly important are aviation activities in areas close to other countries, which are a significant risk;

(g) Reach agreements to ban exercises and manoeuvres in areas where there are intensive commercial fishing, tourism, scientific research or other activities;

(h) Provide advance notice of the use of warships (especially aircraft carriers and amphibious units) in areas close to other countries, in groups or in isolation;

(i) An advance notification system for when units of this type cross passages or straits where there is intense traffic, including the Yucatan Canal, the Florida Straits and Windward Passage;

(j) Establish limits in specific areas for the presence of nuclear-powered ships, as well as more severe restrictions for ships and aircraft with the capacity to carry nuclear arms;

(k) Install "hot lines" between governments and military commanders of the countries in the region so that any urgent situation that arises can be resolved in a timely manner;

(l) Organize bilateral and multilateral contacts and events on a regular basis for specialized personnel in order to improve the relations between military forces in the area and to create a climate of mutual confidence in the military sphere;

(m) Particularly important would be issues relating to military bases of other countries in the region. Initial measures could be taken on the status of such facilities. Advocacy efforts could be made for the withdrawal of facilities that are present against the will of governments and peoples in the area; especially, among other factors, if they infringe the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation where they are situated.

4. Another step towards a system of confidence-building measures could be the qualitative and quantitative limitation of the armed forces of all countries in the hemisphere, while respecting the sovereign right of each nation to have armed forces capable of defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity and maintaining domestic order.

5. To the extent possible, and without any impact on the national security of the respective countries, measures should be taken to promote mutual understanding between the armed forces of the region to ensure greater transparency in all possible areas. States with more powerful armed forces should state their intention not to attack smaller countries.

6. The above will be possible to the extent that States have the necessary armed forces to guarantee their national sovereignty and consider that there is no danger of military attack, political pressure or economic coercion.

Mexico

[Original: Spanish]
[23 May 2008]

Report of the Government of Mexico on General Assembly resolution 62/45 entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context"

1. In response to note verbale ODA/12-2008/CBMRSC of 19 February 2008 from the Office for Disarmament Affairs, set out below is the report of the Government of Mexico on "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context", in accordance with resolution 62/45, adopted on 5 December 2007 by the United Nations General Assembly.

2. Mexico supports and contributes to the implementation of confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context by complying with the international treaties it has signed with respect to weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms.

3. In this connection, pursuant to the relevant General Assembly resolutions, Mexico has submitted reports on the measures taken at the national level in various areas: (a) objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures; (b) the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects; (c) problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus; (d) confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms; (e) conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels; (f) implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; (g) towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms; and (h) transparency in armaments.

4. As part of the confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels, Mexico does not carry out joint military exercises with other countries; however, when invitations are received to participate in such exercises, the military attachés accredited in the host country are designated as observers.

5. With the aim of addressing issues of security and mutual interest in order to promote unity, increase security in the hemisphere and strengthen inter-American friendship, Mexico has participated in a number of regional military forums, including the Conference of Ministers of Defense of the Americas. It has also attended the Conference of the Chiefs of the Air Forces of the Americas as an observer and the Conference of American Armies as an active participant. It has also participated in meetings of the Inter-American Defence Board.

6. At the same time, through the military attachés assigned to the Embassies of Mexico in various countries, the Ministry of Defence has attended conferences and seminars supported by military training centres and, in return, Mexico has invited various military officers to give lectures at military training institutions in order to exchange opinions and experiences on military topics related to hemispheric security.

7. In the bilateral arena, agreements have been signed with the United States Department of Defense for establishing army personnel exchange programmes to strengthen the links of friendship and understanding between the armed forces of the two countries.

8. Mexico also has binational commissions with the United States, Guatemala and Belize which have initiated specific coordination and cooperation activities between the governments with a view to promoting economic and social development as well as security in common border areas.

9. Moreover, in order to promote the publication of information on actions taken by the Ministry of Defence in carrying out its general tasks for the benefit of the people of Mexico, as well as to contribute to greater transparency on defence policy issues by providing information on the organization, structure, size and composition of the armed forces, the Ministry prepared a book on the Mexican army and armed forces which was distributed to the defence ministries of the countries and organizations in the hemisphere.

10. In the context of the Organization of American States (OAS), which is considered to have a role in hemispheric security, the issue became more important at the end of the Cold War, as part of the "new agenda" of that organization. In 1993, the twenty-second OAS General Assembly approved resolution 1247 entitled "Meeting of Experts on Confidence and Security-Building Measures in the Region", which promoted the strengthening of confidence and security between States. Since that time Mexico has taken part in various regional conferences on that topic.

11. In 2007, Mexico participated in the Third Forum on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures which was convened by OAS General Assembly resolution 2270 of 2007 entitled "Confidence and Security-Building in the Americas" and took place at OAS headquarters on 15 April 2008. At that Conference, the following document was circulated: "Summary Table of Member States' Reports on the Application of Confidence- and Security-Building Measures for the Period 1995-2007" (OEA/Ser.K/XXIX) in which it is stated that Mexico has submitted reports for the following years: 1996, 2000, 2002, 2003 and 2006. These reports may be consulted at the following web address: http://www.oas.org/CSH/spanish/mfc.asp.

12. Mexico considers that confidence among States is the basis for consolidating a system of hemispheric security. Mexico therefore recognizes and complies with regional, subregional and bilateral confidence-building measures, including the measures contained in the Declarations of Santiago and San Salvador, and urges other States to meet their commitments in that area, especially the commitment to provide information for the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the System for Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures, as a means of promoting transparency in relations between States.

13. In the multilateral arena, Mexico supports and continues to promote, in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament, the First Committee of the General Assembly and other major disarmament forums, confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context. It also supports the development of a regional approach by providing voluntary financial contributions for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

14. In the same vein, Mexico supports the adoption of resolutions by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and the implementation of measures to strengthen international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

Panama

[Original: Spanish]
[29 May 2008]

1. We believe it is important that States comply with all bilateral, regional and international agreements to which they are a party, including arms control and disarmament agreements. We therefore recommend the adoption of a proposal to establish a reasonable military balance among States and participation in the System for the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditure, as a confidence-building measure at the regional level.

2. Moreover, we consider the experience gained in connection with the implementation of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America as a confidence-building measure at the subregional level which could serve as a model for other regions and subregions at the global level and that these measures will help to build confidence in the regional and subregional context.

Qatar

[Original: English]
[17 June 2008]

1. The State of Qatar supports the establishment of confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels, and participates in it by means of compliance with international conventions related to weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

2. In this respect, and in compliance with United Nations General Assembly resolutions, the State of Qatar provides information on the measures it has taken at the national level concerning specific matters in the field of disarmament and confidence-building, including (a) the prevention of illegal trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects; (b) the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction; and (c) other related matters.

3. The State of Qatar supports and continues to encourage measures that aim at confidence-building at the regional and subregional levels through the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament, the First

Committee of the General Assembly (Disarmament and International Security) and other important disarmament forums.

4. In this respect, the State of Qatar encourages the adoption of resolutions in the First Committee and the implementation of measures that aim to reinforce international efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation.

5. The mandate of the Security Council is the maintenance of international peace and security, according to Article 24 (1) of the Charter of the United Nations. While the work of the Security Council is concerned with peacekeeping operations, which are in some cases established under Chapter VII of the Charter, resolutions adopted under Article 33 of the Charter are also important.

6. In fact, the Government of the State of Qatar is convinced that the resolution of conflicts between States as provided for in Article 33 should be encouraged in order to avoid resort to Chapter VII at later stages.

7. Moreover, the promotion of conflict resolution according to Article 33 of the Charter will help promote the implementation of the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, included in General Assembly resolution 53/243, and can be considered to interpret Article 33, which considers the Security Council the principal organ responsible for conflict prevention and peaceful settlement.

Republic of Korea

[Original: English]
[22 July 2008]

1. The Republic of Korea is actively participating in the discussions on confidence-building measures in various bodies for regional and subregional cooperation encompassing the Korean Peninsula and regions such as North-East Asia, South-East Asia, the Asia-Pacific region and Central Asia. Through its earnest participation it seeks to alleviate tensions in North-East Asia stemming from the particular security situation on the Korean Peninsula and the various historical and geopolitical complexities in the North-East Asian region. Furthermore, through its active participation in the discussions on confidence-building measures, the Republic of Korea seeks also to prevent armed conflicts and to contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in Asia as a whole.

2. To achieve the long-term goal of confidence-building, considerable patience and efforts, on the basis of comprehensive reciprocity, are required. We also recognize that the most effective approach is to begin with issues on which it is easy to reach mutual agreement and of which it is easy to verify implementation, and then to gradually expand the scope of the agenda addressed. With that in mind, the Republic of Korea endeavours to promote dialogue and people-to-people exchanges with a view to nurturing mutual trust and understanding.

Confidence-building measures on the Korean Peninsula

3. The Republic of Korea is well aware of the importance of mutual trust and sincerity for the sake of inter-Korean confidence-building, and it looks forward to the resumption of a serious dialogue with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

4. The Republic of Korea has expressed its willingness to have sincere discussions on how to implement existing inter-Korean agreements, such as the South-North Joint Communiqué of 4 July 1972, the Agreement on the Composition and Operation of Subcommittees for South-North High-Level Negotiations, the Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the South-North Joint Declaration (15 June 2000), and the Declaration on the Advancement of South-North Korean Relations, Peace and Prosperity (4 October 2007). Accordingly, the Republic of Korea is proposing the full resumption of dialogue for the further development of the inter-Korean relations.

5. In order to overcome the ideological confrontation and the long-standing antagonism and achieve peaceful reunification, implementing confidence-building measures on the Korean Peninsula is a key task. To that end, not only is a process of continued discussions and implementation necessary, but the understanding and the support of the international community are also essential to maintain the momentum.

Confidence-building measures in North-East Asia

6. The six-party talks, the framework aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, is a significant confidence-building process in countries of North-East Asia. In this context, the Republic of Korea has actively participated in the discussion on the North-East Asia peace and security mechanism within the six-party talks. At the two meetings of the North-East Asia peace and security mechanism working group held in 2007 (16 March, Beijing/20-21 August, Moscow), the Parties exchanged their views on various issues, including on guiding principles for multilateral security cooperation in North-East Asia.

7. The Republic of Korea has taken an active role in track 1.5 cooperation, such as through the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD) in addition to track 1 cooperation mentioned above. At the 18th meeting of NEACD, held in Moscow from 12 to 14 November 2007, the participants discussed ways to establish a security and peace mechanism in North-East Asia.

Confidence-building measures in the ASEAN Regional Forum

8. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is the only Asia-Pacific intergovernmental and multilateral security cooperative committee in which both the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea participate, and it has contributed greatly to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, including the Korean Peninsula.

9. ARF engages in discussions on regional security issues of common concern to its participants, pursuing a gradual and systematic approach to confidence-building

measures, the development of preventive diplomacy mechanisms and the development of conflict resolution mechanisms.

10. ARF strengthens contact and mutual trust among countries by exchanging high-ranking officials through senior officials and foreign ministers meetings and conducting a midterm review of preventive diplomacy activities and confidence-building measures through the holding of its Inter-sessional Support Group Meeting on Confidence-building Measures and Preventive Diplomacy.

11. It also strives to enhance confidence-building measures in the military field by enhancing military transparency through the submission of its Annual Security Outlook and the voluntary release of its defence white papers. Furthermore, to that end, ARF hosts the Security Policy Conference attended by defence vice-ministers of member States to pursue active exchanges between military officials, the building of mutual trust, and discussions on confidence-building measures related to military issues.

12. Moreover, ARF provides opportunities to promote and encourage discussions through various forums for debates such as inter-sessional meetings, seminars, and workshops, not only to find solutions to common issues that undermine security in the area, such as terrorism, piracy, natural disasters, humanitarian issues, and transnational crimes, including illegal drug trafficking, but also to identify valuable measures for United Nations peacekeeping operations and energy security. This progressive strategy is believed to be highly effective in that it encourages discussions on specific issues and naturally serves to reinforce confidence-building.

Confidence-building measures in the Context of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia

13. The Republic of Korea has been participating actively in the discussions to promote confidence-building in the Asian region. As part of these efforts, it hosted meetings of the Senior Officials Committee and the Special Working Group of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia in June 2008.

14. The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA) seeks to build confidence through increased cooperation in non-military fields such as the development of safe transportation routes, the fight against the illegal drug trade, the management of national disasters, people-to-people exchanges, information technology, energy resources, economy and tourism. Since June 2008 CICA has been seeking to adopt a concept paper and an action plan on each field.

Spain

[Original: Spanish]
[16 June 2008]

1. Confidence- and security-building measures contribute to transparency and reduce the potential for misunderstandings that could contribute to an escalation of local conflicts and accidentally trigger hostilities. The smaller the geographical area, the easier it is to tackle specific issues that could give rise to tensions.

2. Confidence- and security-building measures adopted in a regional or subregional area make it possible to adapt global agreements to the conditions of each region, thus making them more coherent. A knowledge of the region's security dynamics can be used to make progress, for example, in reducing arms ceilings, agreeing on lower thresholds for the notification of military activities, or defining zones that are free from specific types of weapons.

3. Furthermore, at the regional level it is more feasible to adopt joint approaches for settling disputes: prevention, resolution and management of conflicts, including through good offices and mediation support.

4. Regional organizations are in an excellent position to understand the underlying causes of local armed conflicts in view of their better knowledge of the region, so that their efforts to influence conflict prevention or resolution are timely and appropriate, facilitating a rapid response in the case of disputes and emerging crises.

5. The establishment of confidence- and security-building measures facilitates regional dialogue and encourages the sharing of experiences. One example is the struggle against trafficking in persons, arms and psychotropic substances in the area of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It is based to a large extent on border control training programmes which facilitate the dissemination of the same procedures throughout the OSCE region, generating synergies which make national efforts more effective.

6. Cooperation initiatives at the regional or subregional level are beneficial not only for those receiving assistance. The donors and the region as a whole also see an improvement in the level of security. Moreover, for the cooperation to reach the proposed goals it must have sustainable financial support which evolves with the situation and gives priority to areas of higher risk, issues which are easier to evaluate in the regional or subregional context.

7. These regional or subregional measures must take into account the unique situation of the area and they should give priority to responding to the instabilities of greatest concern in the region. At this level it is easier to make progress in implementing the agreed measures, so that new measures can make the existing ones more efficient or be adapted to new challenges.

8. The regional and global approaches to disarmament should be complementary and be applied simultaneously in order to promote regional and international peace and security.

Ukraine

[Original: Russian]
[8 May 2008]

Information on the implementation by Ukraine of General Assembly resolution 62/45, entitled "Confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context"

In accordance with chapter X of the Vienna Document 1999 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures, Ukraine complies with the bilateral agreements which it has concluded with neighbouring States on additional confidence- and security-building measures:

The agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Hungary of 27 October 1998 on confidence- and security-building measures and the development of bilateral military contacts;

The agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Slovak Republic of 30 August 2000 on additional confidence- and security-building measures;

The agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Belarus of 16 October 2001 on additional confidence- and security-building measures;

The agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Poland of 16 April 2004 on additional confidence- and security-building measures.